13: Sarytschew--13 N-3 (1785-90) 1806 Yakut-1-2
116, 302, 756, 786

"In the mean time, I had an opportunity of witnessing the incantations of a Jakutish shaman. He was invited by a sick person to appease the evil spirit supposed to have sent the disorder. The shaman exchanged his usual Jakutish dress for the habit of his office, made of reindeer leather (called Rudwuga), which reached not much above the knee, and was covered over with narrow thongs, and thin bits of iron of different shapes and sizes. Having made his arrangements, he untied his hair that was fastened together upon his head (1), smoked a pipe of tobacco, took his tambourine, seated

1. The shamans only let their hair grow, the other Jakuts cutting their's off, after the manner of the Russian peasantry.

himself in the midst of the jurt, and beating it first at long intervals with his bolujach, or a flat stick covered with reindeer-skin, sung a shaman's song; in which, as my interpreter told me, he challenged all the seven spirits under his command. A few minutes afterwards he began to beat his tambourine again, and bawl with great vehemence, standing up and addressing himself in different positions; and then to jump and hop about the sick person to the sound of his instrument, at the same time screaming with a horrible voice, and distorting himself in a hideous manner. His head, with the dishevelled hair, rolled backward and forward with such rapidity that it seemed to be

moved by springs; his eyes glared like those of a maniac; and falling soon after, from the violent exertion, into a sort of swoon, two Jakuts used their endeavours to support him. Recovering in a few minutes, he called for a knife, with which he stabbed himself in the body, and commanded a Jakut to drive in the weapon to the hilt; then going to the hearth, he took out three burning coals, and swallowing them, danced without discovering any symptoms of pain. At length he pulled the knife out of his body; and, after vomiting the coals with some difficulty, began to prophesy that the sick man would be better if he offered a horse to the wicked spirit which tormented him; at the same time defining the colour of the horse to be sacrificed. In all such cases, the lot, of course, always falls upon the fattest and choicest."